2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma(Chinese Indians)AP1
Burmese AP4

Ba 361

village therefore remained, and has served to drag out a long suburb beyond the Arakan pagoda as a kind of connecting link. Numbers of later arrivals, however, settled in the royal City of Gems, and the wealthier merchants all eventually moved their headquarters thither, so that his majesty triumphed in the end. The best houses in Mandalay, the only brick ones, in fact, till the British came, are all in the possession of the Chinese and Indian merchants. Burmans had neither the right nor the money to build anything but wooden erections. These latter have, however, the compensating advantage that they stand all but the most violent earthquakes, while the brick houses, even when they are strengthened by an elaborate wooden framework, usually collapse when there is anything like a heavy shock.

Ba [563] Be 731 341

But the great majority of the houses are simply wattled huts, with large open spaces in their rear which serve to keep the town airy and well ventilated. According to Burman custom each house has its little shop with the entire stock in trade displayed to the view of the passer-by. As in all Eastern towns, those who occupy themselves with a regular handicraft all flock together. Thus the umbrella-makers and sellers of saddlery live to the south of the palace, vendors of bamboo-work and lacquered boxes to the west, while the potters and miscellaneous goods shops are mostly along the street that leads to Payā Gyi, the Arakan pagoda.

Be 362 341

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There was no attempt at metalling any of the roads, except in independent times the broad thoroughfare which led up from the steamer ghaut, past the ministers' residences, up to the outskirts of the town, for Mandalay lies two miles away from the river-bank, the idea being that at Amarapura the noise of the foreigners' steamers disturbed the royal repose. The big stones which represented the metalling on this one road were rather a trouble than otherwise, except to the vultures and egrets in the wet weather, when all around was a sea of mud, and the boulders formed an eligible coign of vantage. Elsewhere the streets were cut into huge ruts, and the bullock-carts went along in the hot weather in a pyramid of dust, and in the rains a ploughed field would be smooth going in comparison. But the gaily-painted carriages which always suggest a dog-kennel on

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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363 wheels to a European, were strongly built, and the fair dames inside were used to the jolting. It was only when the king or one of the queens went forth that any attempt at road-mending was carried on. Then an ameindaw was issued, Shinbuyin Twet daw mumi, the Golden Majesty, will make a royal progress, and all along the route the house-reeves saw that the rough places were made smooth, and the crooked places straight. Thus the main thoroughfares were kept in a state of fair repair. In other respects, however, Mandalay was vastly
364 superior to all Indian towns. In all the city there is not a
231 drain, but it is equally certain that neither is there a smell. There were no such slums as constantly offend every sense a man has in the Black Town of Madras or the native quarters of Calcutta. This cleanliness was due to the exertions of the great multitudes of swine and dogs. The pigs formed most efficient scavengers during the day-time, and wandered all about in the most independent and ownerless fashion. Charitable people, in search of merit, set out daily meals for them, while all in common threw out their scraps and leavings in the confidence justified by experience that nothing would be left to decay. The great majority of the dogs, equally with the porkers, belonged to nobody in particular, and made themselves comfortable under any house they chose, sleeping nearly all day and howling and fighting all night. These animals were all strenuous adherents of the Old Burman party, and cherished a most fanatic hatred for Europeans. The old boar ran between the legs of the white man or of his pony, in a simulated state of alarm at his faded, ghost-like face, and the pariah dogs let all the town know the progress of a foreigner by their fierce barking and snapping of teeth a yard or so off his calves. The dogs of one street passed him on to the next, so that it was impossible for a wandering Briton to go about the town unobserved. It will not soon be forgotten how the English Assistant Resident had to run for his life from the Mandalay bazaar. He had killed a snarling brute with a quick backward swing of his stick, and the pious life-regarding populace came out upon him armed with billets of firewood and formidable dahs. He managed to keep away from them, but he had a half-mile race of it, and the Residency gates were smashed in by the mob. Then

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the guard dispersed the people. Next day, an old lady, who claimed to be the owner of the dog, visited the big Englishman and told him she forgave him. He was barely polite.

Burmans had no trouble with the pigs and dogs. They found their own countrymen much more awkward to meet. There was constantly some prince or mingyi passing along the streets, and then the road had to be immediately cleared, and every one knelt humbly till the great man passed. Any delay in clearing the path, or an imagined want of reverence in the shikhoing, met with very summary punishment. Before every dignitary rushed along a posse of half-naked lictors, yelling out to the people to bow down, and hitting round about them with their fasces and dahs. These masterful ruffians particularly loved to insult Englishmen. During Mindôn's reign an edict was published exempting Englishmen from the necessity of getting down on their knees in the mud and dust, but ordaining that they should lift their hats. The letyataung dearly loved to launch torrents of abuse at their victim, and make him dismount from his pony and remove his hat when the prince was half a block distant. In the spring of 1880 an English mercantile man was actually bullied into going down on his knees. But, as a rule, where it was possible, foreigners turned down a by-street, or into one of the waste plots of ground. This method of avoiding the annoyance was not open to a Burman. If he tried to avoid paying due obeisance, he was denounced as a disaffected man and thrown into jail.

But there were plenty of other obstructions to be met with in the streets of the royal city. Each householder was considered, or considered himself, perfectly at liberty to do what he pleased with the section of the road in front of his house. Accordingly, when the spirit moved him, he calmly blocked the thoroughfare by erecting a temporary theatre for the performance of a pwè. The construction of such a mandut did not take very long. A framework of bamboo was run up and covered in on the roof, and one side with bamboo matting, and all was ready; the stage was the street, and the spectators deposited themselves where they found room. After the three or four days' performance, the stage was pulled down, and the thoroughfare was clear again.

HOME

Home is Pathwe

Home is the village of Pathwe, Pantanaw Township, Maubin district, Lower Burma. It is located on one of the countless small streams of the Lower Irrawaddy estuary about ninety miles west of Rangoon. The country is a flat alluvium plain dissected by myriads of streams and canals. The monotony of marshy plains is relieved by occasional clumps of trees and tall reeds which flank the streams. The land is a result of depositions of silts from upstream by the Irrawaddy river and its tributaries - a process which is going on today as Lower Burma extends into the bays of Bengal and Martaban. When asked how long his family had lived in the village of Pathwe, U Myaing replied :

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"My parents were born here and their parents before them and their's before them - as far back as we can remember." [591]

The village of Pathwe occupies the adjacent banks of three streams at the point where they join.

The larger town of Pantanaw is located some three miles upstream. The section U Myaing lives in is called YWA-GYI-BET (Big-village-side) and is the main residential area of Pathwe. Directly across the stream, which is about 200 feet wide at this point, are YWA-LAY-BET (small-village-side) and PAYA-GYI-DAUNT (Big-pagoda-corner). 361

YWA-GYI-BET consists of four rows of houses placed 200 feet apart parallel to the main branch of the stream. The rows consist of about fifty houses each and are separated by brick or earth roads. The brick road is raised about three feet to form a passageway in time of floods. Communal lavatories flank both sides of the village rows and the ones on the side of the river have been located about 60 or 70 feet back from the edge of the river "in order not to pollute the water." The lavatories in the village differ from one another, in that some of them are in the house itself and others are outside by a small passageway connected to the house. The houses with lavatories in them depend on the water to carry away the droppings in the rainy season. [363] 514 364 [312]

285 they were made by friends. Ma Aye Myaing and Daw Aw Zar appear to
437 specialize in the larger mats such as used for sleeping. Mat making appears to be an occupation which in ordinary times is unimportant but it is relied heavily upon in bad times.

461 The children are put to work around the house and in processing
562 the fish at an early age. Just recently U Myaing's eldest daughter
561 left school to learn a trade. She left one month ago from the fourth
[277] standard, to learn cheroot rolling. In another month's time she will
874 have learnt how. She does not have to pay any fees - neither is she
[294] paid for her help. She lives with her aunt (U Myaing's sister) and has her meals there. Near their house there is also an embroidery shop which is owned by her aunt. At night U Myaing's daughter is taught embroidery and sewing by her aunt. The owner of the cheroot rolling shop is not a relative, but the women who work there are aunts and grand-aunts of the girl. When she has learnt the trade, then she will be paid between two and three rupees a day on piece work basis.

463 At present (May 1951) U Myaing is working as a sweeper in the
● 363 Rangoon Municipality on a monthly wage of Rs. 80/-. There is an over-
512 seer placed over him every day. U Myaing's main job is to keep one street in town clean. He leaves his house at six and arrives at the overseer's by half past six and there a roll-call is taken of about a hundred of them. At seven he begins on his street and stops at about half-eight to go to answer the roll-call (see below for rest of schedule).. He has personal contact only with the overseer, the doctor and the WUNDAUK (official). All three of them go around the town to see if they work hard enough. The WUNDAUK also comes everyday to witness the roll-call. "If we do not do good work we shall be dismissed. Everything is in their hands. But they do so after two or three warnings. We do not possess any rights at all. Sometimes offenders are sent to other streets that require harder labour. "

U Myaing's street is located in Myeni-gon, and he has to clean the street of dirt as well as clean the drains on either side.

His daily schedule at present is as follows: He rises at 4, washes his face and cleans his teeth, says his prayers and then has plain tea which Ma Aye Myaing has prepared for him. At six he leaves

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And arrives at the overseer's by half six. There he answers the roll-call, after which he leaves for his work location and starts work at 7. At 8. 30 he has a bath and then goes back to answer the roll-call which is called about a quarter to ten. He then returns home for breakfast and a rest. At 12.30 he leaves the house again in time for the roll-call at one o'clock. He starts work at 1. 30 or 2 o'clock and works till ten minutes past 4, at which time he starts back for the evening roll-call. This is taken at a quarter to 5, and he is through for the day. If U Myaing has not bathed in the morning he does so before he returns. When he returns he eats his dinner alone, the others all having eaten already, and after that he works on mats if there are any orders on hand. If there are none he just sits around and spends the evening in general conversation,,sometimes sipping plain tea. After that he says his prayers and retires for the night. His bed time is not fixed. Sometimes he sleeps at 8 or 9, and sometimes works till 11 or 12 in the night if there are mats to weave.